

## The First 150 Years

Dear Friends,

The last 18 months have been a wonderful opportunity to look back at our beginnings and celebrate our past and present achievements. The Homecoming/Sesquicentennial Grand Finale Weekend of October 28–29 left us bursting with pride and setting new goals for another 150 years of service to New Jersey and the nation.

As we gathered in 2002 to begin planning for the 150th, our main goals were to encourage our alumni to reconnect with their College and to help all our friends appreciate just how far we have come since 1855, and how significant the College's and our alumni contributions have been. We know thousands of graduates left here, thanks largely to the taxpayers of the state, with the skills that helped build a great system of public education. We now know that because lawmakers find it harder and harder to find the resources to support higher education, students must pay more and more to attend public colleges. As a consequence, we have come to rely increasingly on friends and supporters, particularly among our own alumni, to contribute resources for the College to provide the very best for our students. We are deeply appreciative of those expressions of support.

Our first Sesquicentennial event, the Torch Run, was such an appropriate beginning. Our crowd of runners gathered at the site of our original campus in Trenton, which today is occupied by Grant Elementary School, headed by Principal RaShawn Adams, Class of 1997 and 2001. The run ended at the Brower Student Center on the current campus, where Professor Emeritus William Hausdoerffer lit a

ceremonial cauldron and the cheering campus community dug into gallons of "Sesqui-mint-ennial" ice cream created by Gabrielle Carbone '98 and Matthew Errico '96.

Over the course of the Sesquicentennial, several academic programs took part in the celebrations. The School of Education involved many students in an oral history project that generated a large number of pictorial and biographical presentations. The English department hosted a nationally acclaimed symposium celebrating the sesquicentennial of Walt Whitman's *"Leaves of Grass."*

Along with an exquisite new library as centerpiece to our campus, many new friends and reconnected alumni, several reinvigorated traditions are a legacy of the Sesquicentennial: the Thanksgiving feast from the bygone Hillwood Inn, February 9 (the College's natal day in 1855) established as an annual Founders' Day Leadership Convocation.

Our celebration was an opportunity to become "newer every day," as we continue to aspire as an institution. TCNJ's success is the result of the hard work and dedication of many individuals over the full 150 years of our history. I feel confident that we will continue to remain worthy of this heritage.

Sincerely,



R. Barbara Gitenstein